

## **Democracy Outreach Alumni Grant Description:**

### **PROGRAM GOALS**

The purposes of the Democracy Outreach Alumni Fund are: to provide alumni with networking opportunities; to further the professional development of alumni and their colleagues; to foster the U.S. Embassy's engagement with alumni; to multiply U.S. Government investment in alumni by assisting them in the implementation and teaching of the concepts they explored during their exchange programs; and to maintain contact with alumni to enable long term evaluations of exchange programs. Funds may be used for the following:

- Initiate a public or volunteer/community service program;
- Support for alumni events; including centers, networking events, or other activities
- Organize training programs or conferences for professional colleagues and/or other alumni on topics related to the exchange program
- Travel grants including cost-sharing for international travel grants

### **GUIDELINES**

1. Alumni who are employed by the US Government are not eligible to apply for the Alumni Small and Travel grants program for up to one year.
2. Both Small and Travel grants should have a cost share of the applicant or inviting organization. Travel grant cost share should be at least 20% of the total budget. Follow up programming is required component for travel grants.
3. Food and refreshments costs for conferences and networking events are allowable up to 10% of the total project costs. Cost sharing with recipient organizations is strongly encouraged.
4. Applicants should consider that it takes at least two months to process the grant proposals and receive an answer.
5. Applicants must specify in the grant proposal whether their proposed project will require official notification of project needs to the Government of Turkmenistan by the U.S. Embassy. Such notification takes a minimum of two months in addition to grant proposal review time. Please build in extra time to the grant project to gain permissions/inform the Government where applicable.
6. Pre-project research of the problem must be conducted to better evaluate and address the problem and present a strong justification in the grant proposal.
7. Materials published under these grants must be reviewed and approved by the Embassy prior to dissemination. Any publications shall acknowledge the support of the Department of State and will include a disclaimer as follows: 'This project was funded, in part, through a U.S. Embassy grant. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed herein are those of the Authors(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State.'

## SELECTION PROCESS

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis, and are judged on the following criteria:

- Strength of proposal – budget, timeline, detailed description of intended participants and intended results, creativity (has this project been done before?)
- USG grants received – preference is given to those who have not received a prior USG grant. Preference is given to applicants with a good record of project performance.
- Timing of project – in *rare* circumstances, the Embassy will consider urgent proposals (under 1 month of lead time); please be aware that submitting a project with inadequate lead time will adversely affect evaluation of the grant proposal.
- Results: How many people will be affected by/included in the grants activity? What kind of audience is involved – age, education level, disabled, alumni, English/Turkmen/Russian speakers, ethnic minorities, foreign audiences, national/regional/local, urban/rural, prior involvement with USG activities through the American Corners/PCVs, etc. What is the long-term effect? What is the short-term effect? Has the project been done before?

The U.S. Embassy welcomes grant proposals that incorporate the following themes and ideas:

Alumni networking events (including regional conferences, or training)  
Economic Development  
American Studies  
Community events  
Academic/professional seminars (all topics)  
Leadership  
Networking Events (including regional conferences, training)  
Youth Activities  
Underserved populations/disabled/undereducated  
Volunteerism  
English Language  
Health Issues  
Sports Education

### **Guidelines for travel grant:**

- Travel grant should have a cost share of the applicant or inviting organization. Travel grant cost share should be at least 20% of the total budget.
- Follow up programming is a required component for travel grant.
- Applicants should consider that it takes at least two months to process the grant proposal and receive an answer.
- The applicant at least once received funding from Democracy Outreach alumni grants and has a good record (i.e. conducted project appropriately, submitted all grant reports on time)
- The applicant must reside in Turkmenistan during submission of his/her application for travel grant.
- The applicant organized minimum one community service project in Turkmenistan before applying for travel grant.
- The applicant must return to Turkmenistan after the trip and conduct follow up activities.
- The applicant should include a letter of invitation, confirmation.
- The Statement of Purpose is required. Please explain why you would like to attend this event and how it will benefit you and/or your community. (500 words max)
- Public Affairs Section encourages applicants to seek co-funding. Please enclose the names of possible sponsors or personal contribution in the budget of the application.
- **Transportation costs** should be limited to “economy class” travel.
- Travel grant will cover only hotel accommodation and airfare expenses.